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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3598
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9445
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 2912
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OSD/ISA/AP// IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 004439

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STATE FOR EAP, PM, S/CT, AND EAP/MTS
USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP (LAWLESS/TOOLAN/BAILEY)
JOINT STAFF/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2016
TAGS: PREL PINS PTER MOPS RP
SUBJECT: OCTOBER 20 UPDATE ON JOLO OPERATIONS

REF: MANILA 4338 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: (U) Deputy Political Counselor Paul O'Friel
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C/REL AUS) Now in its twelfth week, the ongoing Armed Forces of the Philippines operation against the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leadership on the southern Mindanao island of Jolo shows no sign of letting up.

ASG leaders Khadaffy Janjalani, Abu Sulaiman, and the JI bomber Dulmatin remain at large in the rugged terrain in the vicinity of Patikul in central Jolo. The JI's Umar Patek and ASG sub-commander Albader Parad have moved to southeastern Jolo, where Patek is believed to be trying to find ways to escape the island.

¶2. (C/REL AUS) The Philippine Navy, backed by U.S. ships providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support, continues its impressive blockade of the island. To date it has conducted over 2700 maritime interdictions, stopping and searching nearly every vessel arriving or departing Jolo. Significantly, on the night of October 17, U.S. and Philippine forces worked seamlessly to intercept two vessels (one of them high-speed) attempting to flee Jolo for Basilan. Following reports that Umar Patek may have been trying to escape, U.S. P-3 aircraft; Joint Task Force 515 helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles; and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) MK-V vessels shadowed the two boats and vectored an intercept by Philippine Navy and Philippine National Police Maritime Group units. Although Patek was not on board, the speedboat was found to belong to a known ASG logistician, and was piloted by his brother. The 24 passengers and crew, consisting of 14 males, two females, and eight children, are now being detained and questioned by Philippine security forces in Zamboanga.

¶3. (C/REL AUS) The Armed Forces of the Philippines, supported by JSOTF-P, is maintaining an active program of civil military operations, concentrating on former ASG-controlled areas. On October 14, it conducted a medical mission treating 600 patients in a village once known as an ASG "hot spot" in the Patikul region. These types of missions have proven highly effective in separating terrorists from the population.

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